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Invasion of Cuba

Sir: Seldom have I been so amused by a dispatch in a newspaper as I was by that of William Knighton, Jr., which you printed on March 21. The dispatch reports that former Vice President Nixon has accused then Senator and now President Kennedy of violating security restrictions and jeopardizing the planned invasion of Cuba when, during the 1960 campaign, he criticized the Republican Administration for not supporting the Cuban exiles, since Mr. Kennedy had been officially informed "on the fact that for months the CIA had not only been supporting and assisting but actually supporting an invasion of Cuba itself."

As I read those words, the planned attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese began to invade my thoughts, and I could again hear President Roosevelt when he said: "Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan."

Now, I have long held an opinion which seems to me as valid today as when Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in the 1830's: "The majority lives in the perpetual exercise of self-adulation; and there are truths which the Americans can only learn from strangers or from experience."

Prompted by this opinion, I recently made a brief visit to Mexico, where I talked to quite a few informed Mexicans and other Latin Americans residing in Mexico; I read some of their papers, magazines and books, a few of which I brought home.

And I can assure you, Sir, that notwithstanding all the resolutions adopted at Havana in 1958, regardless of their views on Castro himself; despite the thousands of words written and spoken about that attempted invasion of Cuba in April, most Latin Americans feel about it exactly as President Roosevelt felt about Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

Elmer G. Sebastian.

Baltimore, March 21.